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THE BROOKE FAMILY.

By Prof. ST. GEORGE TUCKER BROOKE, Morgantown, W. Va.

(CONTINUED)

THE LATE HON. WALKER BROOKE, UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM  
MISSISSIPPI, 1852.†

Walker Brooke, the sixth and last child of Humphrey Brooke, of Clark county, Va., and his wife Sarah Walker Page, was born at Oakley, Clark county, Va., in 1815. In his early youth he was the pupil of Oliver Abbott Shaw, then a young and eminent graduate of both Cambridge and Yale. He graduated in the University of Virginia in 1836. Soon after his graduation he went to Kentucky where he taught school, and while in this employment he studied law under the instruction of the distinguished jurist Judge Tucker. He was admitted to the bar in that State in 1838. The following year he came to Lexington, Miss. He soon came to be recognized as one of the most prominent members in the front rank of the legal fraternity in his adopted State. In 1840 he was married to Miss Jane Jefferson Lewis Eskridge, daughter of Mr. James Eskridge, of Shongolo, Carroll county, Miss., and a grand-niece of Thomas Jefferson. Of this union fifteen children were born, six of whom now (1907) survive and are living in Mississippi. While industriously and actively devoted to his profession he took a strong and active interest in the current political affairs of his adopted State and the nation, and soon became prominent and held a strong influence as one of the leaders of the Whig party in Mississippi. In 1845, while not yet thirty years of age, he was nominated to be the Whig candidate for Congress for his district, but was defeated by the Democratic candidate. In 1852 he was elected by the Democratic Legislature of his State to the United States Senate to fill out the unexpired term of the Hon. Henry S. Foote, who had recently been elected to the governorship of Mississippi. In 1857-58 he moved to Vicksburg, Miss., where he became the senior partner in the law firm of Brooke & Smedes, which became one of the strongest legal firms in the State. In *ante bellum* days the Democratic party was largely in the ascendency in Mississippi and controlled the political affairs of the State, and had Mr. Brooke been a member of that party he might have held continuously the highest political trusts within the gift of his people; yet his position as a useful public citizen and his legal talent and statemanship ability were recognized and appreciated by both Whig and Democrat, and his courteous and sympathetic personality, united with his genial social qualities, won

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† This biographical sketch Hon. Walter Brooke was prepared by Mr. Hobert Doane Shaw, Sr., of Carrollton, Miss., grandson of Humphrey and nephew of Hon. Walter Brooke.

for him the love and admiration of both parties and all classes of people. He was an ardent admirer and devoted disciple of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, and in his logical and eloquent addresses to the people, and in his arguments before courts he manifested that he belonged to the school of those two distinguished orators and statesmen. He was well versed in all the ancient and English classics, and it was said of him by an eminent scholar and professor who knew him well, that in social converse, in his addresses and political speeches, and in his arguments before the courts and juries he used always the purest and most classical English, and displayed his familiarity with ancient and modern literature. The Supreme Court of Mississippi at one time pronounced him to be the ablest legal and most logical mind that pleaded before that tribunal. In all his political principles he was intensely Southern and was a strong and uncompromising advocate of the doctrine of State sovereignty and States' Rights, and until the crises of secession was forced upon the South, through motives of policy, he was opposed to secession. He was elected to the Mississippi Secession Convention, and at the deliberations of that body he realized that separation was the ultimate result of the antagonism between the North and the South, enthusiastically cast his ballot for secession. By that Convention he was elected to be one of seven delegates to represent Mississippi in a Convention of the seceding States, which convention became the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy. After two sessions, held at Montgomery, Ala., this Congress was moved to Richmond, Va., where, after two sessions, it ended in 1862. Later, Mr. Brooke, by an act of the Confederate Congress, was made a Colonel of Cavalry, and through this commission he was appointed to be a member of a permanent military court provided for by Congress, which held its sessions at Richmond. His duties as a member of this court compelled him to make his residence at the capital during most of the period of the war. The war having ended Mr. Brooke returned to his home at Vicksburg, where he resumed the practice of his profession. By his ability and sound judgment, as well as by his attractive personality, he brought the military authorities at Vicksburg under his influence, and was thus enabled to soften the rigors of military rule over the citizens of that city. He died at his home in the year 1868, universally mourned by the people of Mississippi. In the courthouse at Vicksburg, one on each side of the Judges' bench, hang two large and handsome portraits, one the likeness of the renowned S. S. Prentiss, the other that of Walker Brooke.

ERRATUM.—In foot note on page 104 this Magazine, January, 1910. Instead of Humphrey B. Brooke put Humphrey Brooke of Clarke counts, who was a different man from Humphrey *Booth* Brooke.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)